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ABSTRACT

New American Schools (NAS) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that was founded by business leaders who wanted to improve the quality of public education. To explain how this organization works, an overview of its strategies for helping schools is provided here. The guide is intended for education leaders, policy makers, parents, and community members, and it offers background material on NAS, information about how its design teams assist schools, and suggestions on the selection and implementation of comprehensive school designs. The first section provides an overview of NAS, describing the basic principles guiding the NAS design teams, and suggests the benefits of working with a design team. Subsequent sections offer guidelines to help individual schools select and implement a comprehensive school-improvement design; guidelines for school districts, including a general overview of how school districts can support individual schools; and guidelines for states, which describe how states can help schools and districts tap federal funding for the implementation of research-tested, comprehensive school-improvement plans. The guide also offers descriptions of various NAS designs and describes how schools using designs teach the educational basics. An appendix offers some examples of "tools" that have proven useful in implementing designs. (RJM)

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